

The Shapinsay Sound

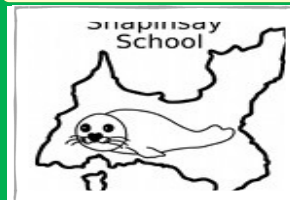


LOCAL

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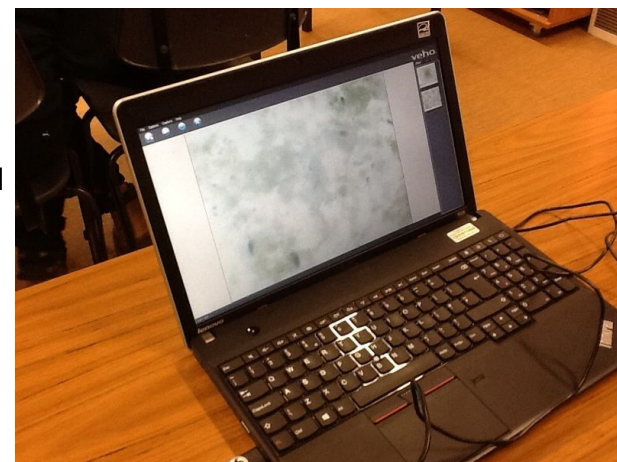
The Nursery children have been learning about traditional stories. Their role play area is currently the 3 bears' cottage and they've been making bridges for the 3 Billy Goats Gruff.

P1 - 3 have been working on their topic of "Castles and Dragons". The role play area is modelled on Balfour Castle and the children are thinking about what life in a Victorian castle would have been like.

They've been making dragons in art and have been exploring changing materials in Science.

The P4 - 7 class have been using microscopes linked to the laptops to view tardigrades. You can see what the children saw in the photo. If you've not heard about tardigrades (and most of the adults in school hadn't!) please do ask the **P4 - 7** children as they have been doing lots of research. **P4 - 7** are also learning about World War Two this term.

We have made more progress towards our School Improvement targets. Anita Angier is working with other schools on French, and we are continuing to develop language teaching here, with French being taught to all the children and Spanish from P4 upwards.



Leanne Bews and the sports committee are continuing to "go for gold" with the Sports Scotland awards and we hope that we will be awarded the gold award when we can apply in June. A lunchtime netball club is now running which all the children can attend. In February Anita and Emma will be attending a science development course in Dunfermline where other authorities will also be attending. This will feed into our work on Science in the school.

All the children have started rehearsing for the pantomime "Dragon Days" and parts have now been allocated. We will be performing on **Thursday 15th March at 1.30pm and 6.30pm** so please save this date in your calendars. The children will be performing one of the songs at the RNLI Ceilidh in February as a sneak preview. Please do come along to join us for this, it should be a good show!

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SHAPINSAY
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The Shapinsay Sound

February 2018

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BIGHIT

The Shapinsay phase of the **BIGHIT** hydrogen project is about to ramp up activity, and over the weeks ahead civil works at the school and the wind turbine site are set to progress. This will enable the main components of the hydrogen production system (the 1MW electrolyser, compressor, trailer hook up points) and the heating equipment for the school (boiler and hydrogen storage) to be brought to site and commissioned.

There will be a number of vehicles and contractors at work on the sites, and we hope any disruption to daily life on Shapinsay will be minimal.

Across the water in Kirkwall, the hydrogen refuelling station commissioning will be running at the same time. Spring will see major hydrogen related activity on Orkney.

A community meeting is being scheduled for **Tuesday 13th February** to provide an opportunity for Shapinsay residents and businesses to talk with representatives of the local organisations who are driving the BIGHIT project forward. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

If you have questions at any time about the project, please do make contact with any of the local partners – SDT, OIC, Community Energy Scotland, or ourselves at EMEC.

The BIGHIT project has attracted significant international interest, and a number of groups from Europe intend to visit Orkney during 2018.

The world is watching what we are doing with energy systems on Orkney – pioneering a future with renewable energy!

Jon Clipsham
Hydrogen Development Manager
EMEC

Chair

Steven Bews

We would like to apologise for the cancellation of the meeting due to be held on January 16th, which was due to circumstances beyond our control.

The public meeting will now be held on Tuesday 13th February 2018 in the Community Rooms starting at 7pm.

The **BIGHIT Hydrogen Project** which is now finally moving on to the construction phase. This will be a chance to see how the project has developed since the AGM and what the next phase of the project will entail. Representatives from a selection of our **BIGHIT** partner organisations will be attending to show how Shapinsay's project links to other hydrogen projects within Orkney.

Housing Needs Survey, which was carried out last summer. With the survey results and a selection of potential housing sites identified, there is now the basis we need in order to have an informed discussion. This will be an opportunity for you, the community, to share your views and engage in a constructive manner with the findings of the survey.

Representatives from OIC and Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust will be on hand to help inform the discussion and give advice on how any potential housing project could be progressed.

This is a major project for the island and could potentially see the provision of housing tailored to Shapinsay's needs.

Shapinsay Heritage Arts and Crafts

The AGM of Shapinsay Heritage Arts and Crafts will take place at 2.30 p.m. on SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25TH in the CLUBROOMS at the Community Centre.

The business part of the event will be to elect, or re-elect, the Board of Trustees, to hear about finances, to ratify the membership fees, and to discuss the running of the Smithy Heritage aspects and craft shop this coming summer. Several exciting ideas are in the pipeline, designed to increase visitor numbers, enhance understanding of the island and to provide opportunities for members to sell their 'Made in Shapinsay' goods. Come and hear what's possible!

Following the business, there will be tea, coffee and biscuits, and the chance to chat, and then an illustrated talk about a Shapinsay man who joined **SIR JOHN FRANKLIN'S EXPEDITION** in search of the **NORTHWEST PASSAGE** in 1845: **THOMAS WORK** was played by **Robert Sinclair of Inkerman** in our 1994 community play, 'Where The Sea Freezes', about Orcadian explorer **John Rae**, in the scene where the ship **HMS Erebus** visited Stromness, last British port of call. Since then much more has come to light about what happened to him and his crewmates.

Louise has visited parts of the Northwest Passage, including where the Franklin Expedition over-wintered on Beechey Island, burial place of 3 of Franklin's sailors, and she has followed Canadian reports of modern searches which add a lot to our knowledge. They eventually led to the finding of the wreck of the Erebus. Her presentation uses a mixture of **FACT** and **FICTION** --- well, informed **SPECULATION**, to illuminate **Thomas Work's** part in the most famous **Arctic expedition of the Nineteenth Century**.

It is hoped that throughout the year we will have more presentations, so if you have something that interests you and you would like to share it, please let the Trustees know. Hope to see you on **February the 25th at 2.30pm**. A strange time for an AGM perhaps, but what better way to spend a winter's afternoon?



HMS Erebus beset in ice in the Northwest Passage, 1846, drawn by Mike Smith, who played Captain Fitzjames in Shapinsay's Community Play in 1994.

Shapinsay history uncovered



Little did Richard and Sue Lawrence know when they moved to Shapinsay that their new home would immediately connect them to the island's past because of its relevance to local people.

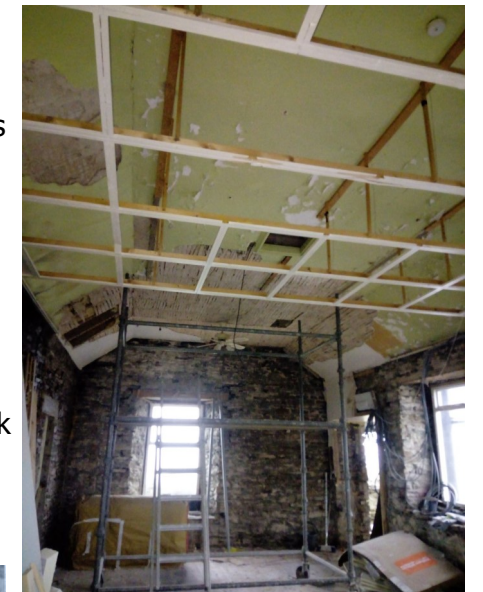
The couple moved to North School from South Wales last July and have been busy renovating the former school room (being the labourers to Barry Moncrieff's skills) much to the interest of some former pupils who've dropped round to see the laths and plaster as it was stripped away and view the original stonework before the room is fully converted into a new kitchen and living area. Says Richard, "we knew that there was some work to do but to strip it out and see how it's been constructed, and then to hear accounts of people that have actually attended the place as a school is really interesting".

They were left a vintage photo of a group of schoolchildren outside the front of the building by the previous owners and are looking forward to delving through other pictures from the building's past at the Heritage Centre and finding out more.

They've been told that the room stopped being used as a school around 1949 and was then used as a Sunday School and a Hen House! The couple are finding it fascinating and Richard has recorded some thoughts about it all for the 'Shapinsay Speaks' oral history project, "this is part of the island's history and in a very small way we're involved," he says.

As part of the conversion the original school floorboards have been uncovered beneath a false floor and these will be lifted and used once insulation has gone in underneath, "so that at least there'll be a little bit of the school in the finished work".

Richard and Sue are no strangers to doing their own homes up and are used to working as a team. They couldn't wait to get going with the work again after the Christmas break with Sue posting a picture of herself on Facebook in full renovation mode - even on New Year's Day!



Elwick Bookwrights

The Elwick Bookwrights had their first meeting this year on Saturday, 20 January, when members looked at Flash Fiction and the challenge of writing a story that is no more than 300 words long. There was also a discussion about book-writing software – ***Write It Now* and *Scrivener***.

We'll continue to examine Flash Fiction at our next meeting on Saturday, 3 February, at 10.15 am in the Boathouse. On 17 February we have a guest speaker coming: Alison Miller will run a workshop on using the Orcadian dialect in writing. **New members are welcome.** See our Facebook page for updates.

Kate Fereday Eshete, Secretary

Marine Animal Strandings

In September I found a dead baby white-beaked dolphin at Grukalty Pier and pulled it to the top of the shore so that it would not be washed away by the tide. I reported the stranding to the UK Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP) and e-mailed them photographs. From these, the scientists were able to establish that the dolphin was a calf, just weaned, and it was probably female; she was emaciated. They hoped to send a trained volunteer from the Mainland to take samples from the carcase, but I did not hear whether or not this happened. Storm Caroline washed the remains away.

Since the Scottish Marine Animal Strandings Scheme records began in 1992, a total of 231 white-beaked dolphins have been washed up on Scotland's shores, with 62 of these in Orkney. Most are stranded from September to February, suggesting they come nearer the shore during these months.

In late December I found two dead seals, one at Grukalty Pier, and the second – a massive grey seal bull, almost 3 metres long – south of Vasa Point.

If you find dead stranded marine mammals, sea turtles or sharks, please help researchers - e-mail strandings@sruc.ac.uk or telephone 01463 243030. They will need photographs and a map reference (you may wish to use www.gridreferencefinder.com to establish this). See www.strandings.org for more information about Scottish strandings. For live rescues, call the SSPCA Animal Helpline on 0300 099 9999.

Kate Fereday Eshete



Dead White-beaked Dolphin at Grukalty Pier

Garden Notes from Old School

In the words of Tom Jones and Cerys Matthews, 'Baby, it's cold outside!' That's how it should be of course at this time of year and personally the spell of ice and snow that we've had recently makes a very welcome change from the rain. A cold spell also helps to kill off some of the not so welcome pests and diseases in the garden and to keep them in manageable numbers.

Last year I bought some dwarf pines, *Pinus mugo* Mughus, but have only just got round to planting them. They like an open position and don't seem to mind the wind but they do need good drainage so eventually, I settled on a spot near to the house where the ground is very gravelly. Like dwarf junipers they only grow to a height of about two feet after several years and being evergreen, provide interest when many other shrubs are dormant.

I also planted a couple of bare rooted Damson Merryweather trees which are supposed to withstand wet ground and harsh weather better than most other varieties. They are incorporated into a hedgerow which consists of goat willow, beech, *rosa rugosa* and *spirea*. Only time will tell if they produce fruit but hopefully we can at least enjoy their delicate white spring blossom.

I also have a Plum Opal but this will spend its life in the green house as I really would like to try to get a crop from this.



During February I will be sowing leek and broad bean seeds. Traditionally, New Year's Day is the time to sow leeks but unless you are a serious exhibitor there's no need to sow quite that early. Tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet and chilli peppers can also be started with heat but they will need to be kept warm right through their growing season.

Most dead stems from herbaceous plants have now been cut down and the borders tidied a little but there is still plenty of decaying matter on the ground for the birds to rake around in. We appear to have three resident pairs of Blackbirds that enjoy poking their beaks into the leaf debris and flicking out bits onto the path until they find what they're looking for. I just hope our local Sparrowhawk doesn't choose one of them as her next meal.

It's an ideal time of year to take willow cuttings. The Balfour willow hedge that I planted three years ago is now well established and big enough to be able to take cuttings from. I want to extend the hedge further now so that it provides more shelter for the pond so I took cuttings of about eighteen inches long and simply pushed about a third into the damp ground.

Garden Notes Part 2

For the last two years we have had a Large Red Damselfly in the garden and I hope that by providing better shelter around the pond it will encourage more to breed here.



Those last bits of winter pruning can be done now if it's not too frosty. A weigela growing against the south wall is obscuring the view so the time has come to do a bit of serious renovation pruning. This entails cutting out about one third of the most mature trunks right down to about six inches above the ground. It seems pretty drastic but this will stimulate new growth from the base which will flower the following year. A sharp pair of secateurs or loppers can be used for smaller pruning jobs but for this, I will need one of my favourite tools, my ARS Turboblade pruning saw. It's the best pruning saw I've ever owned - incredibly sharp and so easy to use, it cuts through branches with very little effort. I guess it's a bit like a chef having a good set of knives, it pays to have decent tools.

On days when the weather is too bad to go outside, I don't feel guilty starting to read one of the books given to me at Christmas, A Gentle Plea for Chaos by Mirabel Osler. On the back cover it says, 'This book is an appeal for a return to a little 'amiable disorder', to the sense of enchantment and vitality that comes with a more random and intuitive approach to gardening, to an awareness of the dynamics of a garden where plants are allowed to scatter as they please.' That sounds like my sort of gardening!

If you have any garden tips that you would like to share or any special plants that you would like to tell others about please let me know and I will include them next month.

Karen Evans, Old School, Shapinsay
karen@evanssmallholder.plus.com

RNLI

Shapinsay Lifeboat Guild Annual Ceilidh, Supper and Dance

Saturday 3rd Feb 2018
7pm for 7.30pm start



Bairns will perform first followed by Haggis/Mince & clapsnot supper
 Cameron Stout will comper the Ceilidh
 Music by Shapinsay Music Group and Tone Deaf
 Adults Ceilidh Supper Dance £10 Under 16's £5
 Supper/Ceilidh or Ceilidh/Dance Adults £6
 Supper/Ceilidh or Ceilidh/Dance under 16's £3
 All Participants Free or donation towards supper
 Raffle - Roll the coin -Bar



Shapinsay Wildlife Matters

by Paul Hollinrake

Goldfinches



There's no doubt that goldfinches are spectacular looking birds, rather exotic even. They are becoming increasingly common in Orkney. Until recently they were a very rare sight, but increasing numbers in the early 2000s led to the first breeding record in Finstown in 2009. I first found them in a winter bird seed crop in the SE of Shapinsay in 2010. Since then I have heard of them being seen in folk's gardens more and more frequently. There was a couple in the garden at Sandsend recently and reports of them at Newfield Cottage. In both cases they are using bird feeders and their favourite food is small black niger seeds.



A juvenile goldfinch is very dull without the red head.

In the wild in the UK they feed on thistle and dockan seeds, and the males with slightly larger beaks than females like to eat teasel seeds. Goldfinches are a common bird in Britain with an estimated 1.2 million pairs breeding. In Orkney they can now be seen in small numbers all year around, with a walk up the Heddle road in Finstown being an almost guaranteed place to find them if you are patient. So far the largest flock seen in Orkney was 45 in Carness in 2016.

The collective name for a group of goldfinches is a charm, from the old English C'irm describing their liquid twittering song.

The Latin name for thistle is Carduus, giving rise to the bird's scientific name of Carduelis carduelis. I could not find an Orkney name for these birds, perhaps reflecting the fact that they are new arrivals in the County. They have many old names throughout the UK such as thistle finch, goldie, gold linnet, redcap and King Harry. If you put bird seed out in your garden you might get lucky and find one of these lovely birds. Keep your eyes peeled.